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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifty-fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 60th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 24 April 1998, at 10.35 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SELEBI (South Africa)

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CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION:

(a) ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS;

(b) NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS;

(c) COORDINATING ROLE OF THE CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND MACHINERY DEALING WITH THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS;

(d) HUMAN RIGHTS, MASS EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

(agenda item 9) (continued) (E/CN.4/1998/L.41/Rev.1)

1. Mr. CASTRO GUERRERO (Observer for Colombia), introducing the draft resolution on the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/1998/L.41/Rev.1), said that a consensus had been achieved thanks to the very spirit of cooperation advocated in the text. He proposed a small amendment to the fourth preambular paragraph, deleting the words "the principle of".

2. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1998/L.41/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.

3. Ms. GLOVER (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said she wished to explain its position with regard to resolution E/CN.4/1998/L.74 entitled "Towards a culture of peace". A culture of peace, whilst having an impact on human rights, was not in itself a human rights issue. The Union therefore considered that it was a matter best considered in forums other than the Commission, especially given the proliferation of issues under consideration. Work was already under way on the issue within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and member States had already participated substantially in the process.

4. Mr. KUZNIAR (Poland) said that his delegation had initiated the discussion at the current session on the draft resolution on human rights and good governance. The overwhelming majority of the delegations that had participated in consultations had shared his delegation's view regarding the validity of the issue, but it had also been agreed that more time and preparation were required before the Commission was invited to take action on the draft resolution, which deserved careful preparation. His delegation had therefore decided to defer the draft resolution until the next session.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that consideration of agenda item 9 had been concluded.

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES, INCLUDING:

(a) QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

(agenda item 10) (continued) (E/CN.4/1998/L.82 and 102/Rev.1)

6. The CHAIRMAN said that the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in East Timor (E/CN.4/1998/L.82) had been replaced by a Chairman's Statement, which he would read to the Commission.

"The Commission on Human Rights discussed the human rights situation in East Timor.

The Commission continues to follow with deep concern the reports on violations of human rights in East Timor.

The Commission recalls the undertakings by the Government of Indonesia to promote human rights in East Timor and those contained in Chairman's Statements on the matter at previous sessions. The Commission stresses the need for their implementation, including concrete steps on the early trial and release of East Timorese detained or convicted, and for those in custody to be treated humanely. The Commission reiterates the need for further clarification of the circumstances surrounding the Dili incident of 1991.

The Commission welcomes the advanced progress towards concluding the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Indonesia and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on technical cooperation and agreement on the early assignment of a programme officer to implement the technical cooperation programme. In this regard, the Commission notes the understanding between the Government of Indonesia and the High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning access of the programme officer to East Timor, within the framework of technical cooperation.

The Commission welcomes the efforts of the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights to promote and protect human rights and undertake fact-finding inquiries into human rights violations, including through its office in Dili. The Commission notes the commitment by the Government of Indonesia to continue to allow greater access to East Timor by the international media and international humanitarian organizations.

The Commission welcomes the intention of the Government of Indonesia to continue to cooperate with the Commission on Human Rights and its mechanisms, and, in particular, the Government's decision to invite the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to visit East Timor in advance of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission.

The Commission notes with interest the Government of Indonesia's decision to launch a National Plan of Action on human rights in 1998 and, in that context, the Government's intention to ratify the Convention against Torture.

The Commission welcomes the dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General for achieving a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor. In this context, the Commission stresses the need for constructive actions in order to promote a favourable atmosphere for further progress towards a solution. The Commission welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, the work of his special representative, in particular the establishment of regular dialogue at senior official level, and the continuing all-inclusive intra-East Timorese dialogue.

The Commission requests the Secretary-General to keep it informed on the situation of human rights in East Timor and will consider the matter at its fifty-fifth session."

7. The Chairman's Statement was adopted.

8. Ms. DIALLA (Senegal), introducing the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Burundi (E/CN.4/1998/L.102/Rev.1), said that all the information submitted to the Commission confirmed that the authorities in Burundi had made progress in bringing about peace and reconciliation in the country. The human rights situation in several parts of the country still, however, gave rise to concern. The aim of the draft resolution was therefore to encourage the Government to continue its efforts to reinstate all the country's human rights institutions. All the delegations involved had participated in consultations and the draft resolution represented a fair compromise. Lastly, she noted that the first document number in paragraph 1 should read "E/CN.4/1998/72".

9. Mr. COMBA (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that paragraph 26 of the draft resolution provided for the extension of the Special Rapporteur's mandate for one year. Financial provisions of US$ 143,900 to cover activities relating to the mandate in 1998-1999 had been included in the human rights section of the budget for the current biennium.

10. Ms. GLOVER (United Kingdom), explaining the position of the European Union, said that the Union would join the consensus, but with some concern over the content of the resolution and the negotiating process. Whilst welcoming references in the original draft to ongoing regional efforts to achieve a peace in Burundi, it was disappointed that it contained very few elements on the human rights situation there and that what had been included was not a well-balanced reflection of the situation. The Union had not been given an opportunity to contribute to the drafting process beforehand and copies of the resolution had been made available only very late in the session.

11. The Union had entered the negotiations with the African Group with a view to integrating more elements from the Special Rapporteur's report. It welcomed the decision to take on board new language on the abduction of

children into armed groups, detention conditions and landmine clearance, but was concerned that other proposed amendments, including previously agreed language, had not been accepted. The Union urged the sponsors to consider approaching the resolution in a more transparent, open and conciliatory manner in the future, in order to avoid rushed consideration of the issue by the Commission as a whole.

12. Mr. NAHAYO (Observer for Burundi) said that the draft resolution could unfortunately not be totally binding on Burundi, since it overlooked the violation of the most basic human rights of the people of Burundi resulting from the embargo, which should be lifted. Maintaining a people in a situation of constantly needing assistance detracted from its dignity, and ran counter to resolution 1998/11, which stated that no coercive political or economic measures should be taken against any country, especially a developing country. The Special Rapporteur himself had noted that the economic sanctions imposed by the countries of the subregion were having a disastrous effect on the general population of Burundi. The international community should therefore condemn the illegal embargo. Burundi reaffirmed its determination to continue to promote civil and political rights, provided that it received greater support from the international community.

13. Mr. McALISTER (Canada) shared the concern over the way the draft resolution had been negotiated. Other delegations had been given very little time to comment on the text to resolve a number of substantive difficulties. His delegation was concerned particularly at the almost total absence of references to the human rights situation. It had fortunately proved possible, however, with flexibility on the part of the delegations concerned, to strike a number of compromises on key issues. His delegation was therefore able to join the consensus, even though the final text remained problematic in a number of respects. In future years it would be essential to ensure that adequate time was made available for open consultations.

14. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1998/L.102/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.

15. Mr. GASANA (Rwanda) said that the people of Rwanda had for four years been engaged in rebuilding the country, aiming for peaceful cohabitation with their neighbours and stability in the subregion. The country had shown that it was working to gain respect for human rights, but it faced substantial challenges. Socio-economic, financial and security issues had to be addressed; thousands of people accused of genocide had to be brought to trial; the state of prisons was unsatisfactory, and the international community's help was needed to ensure that those responsible for genocide still at large were brought before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Other problems included terrorism by former members of the Rwandan Armed Forces and other Interahamwe in the north-west of the country, refugees and the rehabilitation of survivors.

16. The Government's major aim was to arrive at a situation where every Rwandan understood that human life was sacred. It would therefore set up an independent national human rights commission, which would be requiring adequate resources, as the report of the Special Rapporteur had indicated. She appealed to the international community to set up a scheme on the lines of

the Marshall Plan, with a view to assisting the development of all sectors of national life, the resettlement of those returning to the country and survivors of the genocide, the establishment of justice and national reconstruction.

17. Ms. GLOVER (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union and supported by Mr. McALISTER (Canada), said that the Presidency of the European Union was concerned about the intention of the Government of Rwanda to carry out a public execution of 22 people convicted of involvement in the 1994 genocide. It was particularly concerned that the executions were to be public, contrary to previous assurances given by the Government. The announcement had been made shortly after the adoption by the Commission of draft resolution E/CN.4/1998/L.101 on the situation of human rights in Rwanda. The issue of executions in Rwanda had been the subject of much discussion during negotiations on the text, in which the European Union had made concessions in favour of the position of the Government of Rwanda. The Union urged Rwanda to comply fully with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to observe other international safeguards concerning the use of the death penalty. It also urged the Government to show the utmost restraint with regard to the imposition of the death penalty, with a view to its total abolition.

18. Mr. PLORUTTI (Argentina) said that his delegation had again voted in favour of draft resolution E/CN.4/1998/89 on the situation of human rights in Cuba, in the hope that it might help improve the situation of human rights in that country. Nevertheless, his delegation endorsed the sections of the draft resolution which took account of the progress achieved in the areas of religious freedom and the release of political prisoners. It encouraged the Cuban Government to expand on those positive steps and to continue to show tolerance as it had during the recent visit of the Pope to Cuba. Therefore, its vote should not in any way be interpreted as a statement against that country, with which it entertained close ties of brotherhood and solidarity. His delegation trusted that the Cuban Government would soon join the other countries of Latin America in the consolidation of democracy and respect for human rights.

19. Mr. SUMI (Japan) said that his delegation had supported the adoption of draft resolution E/CN.4/1998/L.81/Rev.1 on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, although it had some reservations regarding the text. That resolution expressed the concerns of the international community with regard to both human rights and democratization. His delegation hoped that the Special Rapporteur would be given the opportunity to visit Myanmar as soon as possible. It recognized that positive events had taken place over the past year and hoped that the Government of Myanmar would take further measures to improve the human rights situation and expedite the democratization process. Japan was prepared to assist in achieving those goals.

20. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus on the Chairman's text regarding the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and agreed that it was a cause for international concern. That situation would improve significantly once peace was restored and reconstruction could begin. Pakistan's efforts to end the internecine conflict had shown that progress towards peace in Afghanistan required respect

for the customs and traditions of its people, affirmation of the role of the United Nation as an impartial mediator and the imposition of an effective arms embargo. His delegation was confident that the international community supported those objectives.

21. Since June 1997, his Government had been making efforts to promote the concept of dialogue with all the parties to the conflict. Agreement had been achieved to begin a dialogue among the Ulema, or religious scholars, in which the Taliban and the Northern Alliance would both be represented. It had also contributed to the concept of a dialogue between the six immediate neighbours of Afghanistan and the two major Powers, the United States of America and the Russian Federation. Building on those efforts, some important understandings had been achieved within the past few days, including talks on a ceasefire and an exchange of prisoners, the education of women and equal access to health facilities. Pakistan hoped that the international community and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would support those efforts.

22. Mr. HERNÁNDEZ BASAVE (Mexico) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on various resolutions under agenda item 10, in some cases because the draft resolutions had been negotiated without sufficient transparency, and in others because it found the texts overly politicized. Traditionally, that agenda item had attracted the greatest interest among members of the Commission, who had increasingly taken the opportunity to argue in favour of observing the principles of objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues. There had been repeated appeals for a depoliticization of the agenda.

23. The Commission had to overcome pointless confrontation and selectivity and devote more attention to an analysis of the structural causes impeding the full enjoyment of human rights, which would be improved not by the imposition of mechanisms, but through dialogue and cooperation. Finally, his delegation regretted that the Commission had been forced to put to a vote some draft resolutions which in past years had enjoyed consensus.

24. Mr. MORJANE (Tunisia) said that his delegation had supported draft resolution E/CN.4/1998/L.85, regarding Kuwaiti citizens and others disappeared during the Gulf War, on the grounds of humanitarian principles. That resolution should help to bring about reconciliation between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi people. In turn, the sovereignty of Iraq had to be respected and the international community had to act to relieve the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE SESSION (agenda item 3) (continued) (E/CN.4/1998/L.2, E/CN.4/1998/L.107)

25. Mr. QUAYES (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the co-sponsors of draft decision E/CN.4/1998/L.2, said that, in the belief that impending developments would subsume the substance of that draft decision, they wished to withdraw it from consideration.

26. Draft decision E/CN.4/1998/L.2 was withdrawn.

27. The CHAIRMAN said that, six weeks earlier, he had proposed the establishment of an inter-sessional body to review the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights. Since then, he and other members of the Bureau had held extensive consultations and had received many useful contributions in that respect. The review was intended to cover all bodies and mechanisms which reported to the Commission, based on the key principle of their enhancement.

28. The review itself would be undertaken by members of the Bureau under his leadership through consultations with States, regional groups, the High Commissioner and NGOs, and taking into consideration all proposals made in connection with the work of the Commission. The essential elements of the review would be transparency and cooperation. The recommendations and proposals would be submitted to the following session of the Commission for its consideration.

29. He then read out the text of a draft decision:

> "At its 60th meeting, on 24 April 1998, the Commission on Human Rights decided with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights, to appoint the Bureau to facilitate the review of the bodies and mechanisms of the Commission with a view to making recommendations to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights."

30. The draft decision on the review of the mechanisms of the Commission was adopted.

31. The CHAIRMAN introduced draft resolution E/CN.4/1998/L.107 on the question of resources for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the human rights activities of the United Nations, which he said was based on a number of significant developments which had occurred since the Vienna Conference. Those included the creation of the post of High Commissioner, the implementation of reform measures, with particular attention to the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system, an expansion of the activities financed under the mandates of the Economic and Social Council, the welcome increase of some 30 per cent in the number of ratifications by Member States of the six main human rights treaties, and a noticeable trend in favour of establishing or expanding mandates in the area of economic, social and cultural rights.

32. The budget allocation to the Office of the High Commissioner on a biennial basis had been $40.3 million and $45.2 million in the past two biennia. The initial allocation for the current biennium was $42.2 million. The draft resolution took the form of an appeal to the Secretary-General, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, but also to all Governments, to secure sufficient resources to permit effective fulfilment of responsibilities and mandates. He appealed strongly to members to ensure that the spirit of the resolution was maintained until the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly met later in the year, and that Governments which had endorsed it in Geneva did not develop amnesia in New York.

33. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1998/L.107 was adopted.

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (agenda item 25) (E/CN.4/1998/L.1, E/CN.4/1998/L.106)

34. The CHAIRMAN, introducing his proposal for the restructuring of the agenda, contained in document E/CN.4/1998/L.106, said that for some time it had been clear that the agenda did not correspond with the real world, and several attempts had been made to reform it. He believed that his proposal fulfilled a number of important objectives, by placing the human rights of women and a gender perspective on the Commission's agenda for the first time, by allowing an assessment of the implementation of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and by providing for an annual review of the Commission's work and the corresponding agenda. The latter was especially important because the Commission had constantly to seek ways to improve its methods of work in order to remain relevant. The new agenda, if adopted, would supersede document E/CN.4/1998/L.1.

35. A common understanding was needed on two points. Firstly, in the past the Commission had tended to cluster items, precisely because the agenda did not deal with them in a systematic manner. The new agenda alleviated that problem and would allow items to be scheduled so that they corresponded with the agenda. Secondly, the new agenda reduced the number of items from 26 to 21, although the length of the session had not been shortened. That meant that consideration could be given to increasing the time devoted to certain items in the light of past practices.

36. The draft provisional agenda for the fifty-fifth session of the Commission, as contained in E/CN.4/1998/L.106, was adopted.

REPORT TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ON THE FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (agenda item 26) (E/CN.4/1998/L.10 and Addenda 1-21, E/CN.4/1998/L.11 and Addenda 1-7)

37. Mr. KUZNIAR (Poland), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Commission on its fifty-fourth session, said that, as in the past, it consisted of two parts, a compilation of the 83 resolutions and 11 decisions adopted at the current session contained in document E/CN.4/1998/L.11 and Add.1-7; and the proceedings, including the general debate and the voting under the various agenda items, contained in document E/CN.4/1998/L.10 and Add.1-21. The draft report was limited to proceedings of a technical nature. Substantive statements were to be found in the summary records of the Commission. He also noted that, in conformity with new editorial guidelines, the report on the current session would be shortened and any text or amendments which had not been adopted would not be reflected. Any members who wished to submit corrections to the report should do so by 8 May 1998.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that, as in the past, the draft report would be adopted ad referendum, on the understanding that it would be finalized by the Rapporteur with the assistance of the Secretariat. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Commission agreed to the procedure.

39. It was so decided.

The meeting was suspended at 11.50 a.m. and resumed at 12.10 p.m.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

40. Mrs. ROBINSON (High Commissioner for Human Rights) congratulated the Chairman and members of the Commission on the outcome of six weeks of serious deliberation and action across the full spectrum of human rights. She said the question the Chairman had posed at the beginning of the session - that the Commission should ask itself at the end if it had "made a difference" to the lives of people throughout the world - was one that needed to be asked every day. The Chairman had been right when he had said that the Commission's work took place over a full year, and not just six weeks.

41. The session had provided signal achievements, notably approval of the draft Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, whose adoption by the General Assembly would be an important contribution to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But adoption alone was not enough; declarations needed implementation. The assassination of the Colombian human rights activist, Eduardo Umaña Mendoza, had been a brutal reminder of the price that was being paid by those who devoted their lives to the protection of human rights. As a first step in honouring the approval of the draft Declaration, she earnestly hoped that all individuals who had come to the session to raise their concerns about human rights violations and abuses would be able to return to their countries without fear of retribution.

42. She welcomed the special meeting which the Commission had devoted to the question of integrating gender issues into its work, as well as the dialogue it had begun with the Commission on the Status of Women. It had been a promising beginning upon which to build understanding of the issues and roles of both bodies.

43. The session had also enhanced the Commission's recognition of the role of national institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights. Her Office regarded national capacity-building as a matter of considerable importance, and there had been an encouraging growth in the number of requests it had received for support to be given to the establishment and strengthening of national institutions. The Commission's resolution provided encouragement in that respect.

44. She welcomed the adoption by consensus of a resolution to enhance work on the right to development, and the creation of new mandates to report on economic, social and cultural rights. While welcoming the Commission's more balanced approach, her Office was faced with the impossible task of meeting mounting demands with dwindling resources. It received just 1.67 per cent of the United Nations regular budget, and so she welcomed the Chairman's resolution adopted during the current meeting, appealing to the Secretary-General, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to take steps to secure sufficient resources to enable it to discharge the responsibilities and mandates established by member States.

45. The Commission had adopted a resolution during the session on the composition of her Office's staff, and while she believed that the issue of equitable geographical distribution should apply across the Secretariat, she recognized a need to respond to some of the concerns in the resolution, and

urged member States and observers to work towards a common understanding on those questions. She took the opportunity to inform the Commission that Mr. Bacre Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and a long-time human rights activist in the NGO world, had been appointed to fill the D2 position in the New York office with effect from 1 June 1998.

46. Finally, she congratulated the Commission on securing agreement on a reformed agenda and for a thorough review of its own mechanisms with a view to enhancing their effectiveness. Her Office looked forward to close cooperation with that review, which would complement her own responsibility to streamline and improve the efficiency of the human rights programme.

47. The fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration was a time not for celebration but for recommitment to redress many of the wrongs and inequities in the world. Through its work during the current session and its commitment to enhancing its mechanisms, the Commission had indeed honoured the Universal Declaration.

48. The CHAIRMAN, after providing statistics on attendance at the session, the duration of meetings and the number of resolutions and decisions adopted, said he firmly believed that the challenge he had posed at the beginning of the session - to make a difference in the promotion and protection of human rights - had been met. After 13 years of negotiation, the Commission had adopted a Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Greater emphasis had been placed on economic, social and cultural rights, inter alia by the creation of new mechanisms to focus on the right to education, the right to development and extreme poverty. An interactive dialogue had been held on women's rights, a format which he hoped would become a permanent feature of the Commission, focusing on a particular theme each year.

49. In addition, an open-ended working group was to meet during the following session in order to make proposals to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Cooperation among States and between States and non-governmental organizations had increased, while open hostility and conflict had decreased. The agenda had been restructured and provision made for an annual review, and a body had been established to review the mechanisms of the Commission and to report to the fifty-fifth session.

50. Some areas, however, remained unfulfilled. In particular, despite the adoption of the Declaration, human rights defenders continued to be persecuted and some had even lost their lives. Only a few days previously, the Commission had observed a minute's silence following the killing of a Colombian human rights lawyer who had attended its sessions on previous occasions. He urged all parties to ensure that the principles contained in the Declaration were honoured by all and that nobody who had attended the session needed to fear persecution on returning home.

51. Secondly, he had the impression that a ritual approach was being adopted to some issues and that a fear of "sending the wrong message" was preventing flexibility. States should resist the temptation to bring bilateral disputes into the Commission, thereby unnecessarily politicizing its work. He believed

that the group system was a hindrance to the promotion and protection of human rights. It often appeared that group solidarity took precedence over the promotion and protection of human rights.

52. Thirdly, inadequate resources continued to plague the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. He felt it was appropriate for the Commission to appeal to the General Assembly for additional resources commensurate with the demands placed on the Office. At the same time, States should continue to make up for the shortfall in regular budget resources through voluntary contributions, particularly in areas such as racism and torture.

53. Fourthly, the Commission continued to struggle with the concepts of non-State party actors and terrorism in relation to human rights and human rights abuses. That area would have to be addressed in the coming years, also in connection with the establishment of an international criminal court.

54. Lastly, the voluminous reports of the Commission's special rapporteurs indicated that human rights violations persisted throughout the world, while some countries still failed to extend to the special rapporteurs the cooperation they needed to carry out their functions.

55. After the customary exchange of courtesies, he declared the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights closed.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.